

Department of County Human Services



March 22, 2023

Senator Jama, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 611

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson and Members of the House Committee,

We are writing in support of SB 611, which would limit annual residential rent increases to 3% plus the Consumer Price Index, with a maximum of 8% per year, as well as increase relocation financial assistance that landlords must provide tenants when issuing no-cause evictions.

With rents increasing up to 14.6% in 2023 and pandemic eviction protections fully phased out, Oregon has seen a drastic increase in evictions. The current allowable annual rent increases are capped at 7% plus the Consumer Price Index. While this amount may be reasonable most years, during times of extreme inflation, these rent increases can be exorbitant. According to a study from PSU, "Eviction rates fell close to zero in the early months of the pandemic and rose to over 50% of historical average in July 2021, towards the end of the CDC Moratorium, surpassing historical average in June, August, and September of 2022." With even higher rent increases in 2023, this number is expected to continue to increase. This bill would cap rents at a reasonable amount of 8% or 3% plus the Consumer Price Index, remedying the catastrophically high rent increases caused by extreme inflation.

This bill prevents eviction and homelessness by capping rent increases to help ensure that renters can continue to afford their homes. This bill will have a notable benefit to households composed of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, older adults, and people with disabilities, as they are all statistically more likely to be renters, have lower incomes, be cost-burdened in housing, and be at risk of eviction.

Additionally, it would increase the amount of financial support tenants would receive, if evicted due to no fault of their own. Moving is a large expense and most tenants need time to budget for the compounding costs, including application fees, deposits, and movers. This increase of relocation assistance from one month to three months of rent

more adequately covers the additional cost that tenants will incur if their landlord issues a no-cause eviction.

The views of members of the impacted communities were centered in designing these important protections and eviction prevention supports for renters. Community-based organizations, legal services providers, and several others representing impacted communities contributed to this bill.

We at Multnomah County support SB 611 and ask that you take this critical step to address the eviction crisis and homelessness prevention for renters across the state.

Thank you,

Mohammad Bader, MS,LPC
Director
Department of County Human Services

Peggy Samolinski
Director
Youth and Family Services Division